



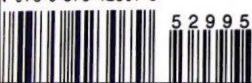
IN THE SHADOW OF NO TOWERS

art spiegelman



004 Current Affairs

N 978-0-375-42307-9



In connection with to-night's developments it is explained that opening of the outer wound did not affect the two interior wounds, front and one in back, from which the President is suffering. The wounds, it was added, are healing nicely.

clogged drain, running late for an appointment—send me into a sky-is-falling tizzy. It's a trait that can leave one ill-equipped for coping with the sky when it actually falls. Before 9/11 my traumas were all more or less self-inflicted, but outrunning the toxic cloud that had moments before been the north tower of the World Trade Center left me reeling on that faultline where World History and Personal History collide—the intersection my parents, Auschwitz survivors, had warned me about when they taught me to always keep my bags packed.

It took a long time to put the burning towers behind me. Personal history aside, zip codes seemed to have something to do with the intensity of response. Long after uptown New Yorkers resumed their daily jogging in Central Park, those of us living in Lower Manhattan found our neighborhood transformed into one of those suburban gated communities as we flashed IDs at the police barriers on 14th Street before being allowed to walk home. Only when I traveled to a university in the Midwest in early October

did I realize that all New Yorkers were out of their minds compared to those for whom the attack was an abstraction. The assault on the Pentagon confirmed that the carnage in New York City was indeed an attack on America, not one more skirmish on foreign soil. Still, the small town I visited in Indiana—draped in signs that reminded me of the garlic one might put on a door to ward off vampires—was at least as worked up over a frat house's zoning violations as with threats from "raghead terrorists." It was as if I'd wandered into an inverted version of Saul Steinberg's famous map of America seen from Ninth Avenue, where the known world ends at the Hudson; in Indiana everything east of the Alleghenies was very, very far away.

One of my near-death realizations as the dust first settled on Canal Street was the depth of my affection for the chaotic neighborhood that I can honestly call home. Allegiance to this melted nugget in the melting pot is as close as I comfortably get to patriotism. I wasn't able to imagine myself leaving my home for safety in, say, the south of France, then opening my *Arld Tribune* at some café to read that New York City had been turned into radioactive rubble. The realization that I'm usually a "rooted" cosmopolitan is referred to in the fourth of *No Towers* comix pages that follow, but the unstated phantasy that underlies all the pages is only implied: I made a vow that morning to return to making comix full-time despite the fact that comix can be so damn labor intensive that one has to assume that one will live forever to make them.



had happened that would have done a Frenchman proud. (My susceptibility for conspiracy goes back a long ways but had reached its previous peak after the 2000 elections.) Only when I heard paranoid Arab Americans blaming it all on the Jews did I reel myself back in, deciding it wasn't essential to know precisely how much my "leaders" knew about the hijackings in advance—it was sufficient that they immediately instrumentalized the attack for their own agenda. While I was going off the deep end in my studio, my wife, Françoise, was out impersonating Joan of Arc—finding temporary shelter for Tribeca friends who'd been rendered homeless, sneaking into the cordoned-off areas to bring water to rescue workers and even, as art editor of *The New Yorker*, managing to wrest a cover image from me, a black-on-black afterimage of the towers published six days after the attack.

I'd spent much of the decade before the millennium trying to avoid making comix, but from some time in 2002 till September 2003 I devoted myself to what became a series of ten large-scale pages about September 11 and its aftermath. It was originally going to be a weekly series, but many of the pages took me at least five weeks to complete, so I missed even my monthly deadlines. (How did the newspaper cartoonists of the early twentieth century manage it? Was there amphetamine in Hearst's water coolers?) I'd gotten used to channeling my modest skills into writing essays and drawing covers for *The New Yorker*. Like some farmer being paid to not grow wheat, I reaped the greater rewards that came from letting my aptitude for combining the two disciplines lie fallow.

A restlessness with *The New Yorker* that predated 9/11 grew as the magazine settled back down long before I could. I wanted to make comix—after all, disaster is my muse!—but the magazine's complacent tone didn't seem conducive to communicating hysterical fear and panic. At the beginning of 2002, while I was still taking notes toward a strip, I got a fortuitous offer to do a series of pages on any topic I liked from my friend Michael Naumann, who had recently become the editor and publisher of Germany's weekly broadsheet newspaper, *Die Zeit*. It allowed me to retain my rights in other languages and came complete with a promise of no editorial interference—an offer no cartoonist in his right mind could refuse. Even one in his wrong mind.

The giant scale of the color newsprint pages seemed perfect for oversized skyscrapers and outsized events, and the idea of

conviction that I might not live long enough to see them published. I wanted to sort out the fragments of what I'd experienced from the media images that threatened to engulf what I actually saw, and the collagelike nature of a newspaper page encouraged my impulse to juxtapose my fragmentary thoughts in different styles.

The pivotal image from my 9/11 morning—one that didn't get photographed or videotaped into public memory but still remains burned onto the inside of my eyelids several years later—was the image of the looming north tower's glowing bones just before it vaporized. I repeatedly tried to paint this with humiliating results but eventually came close to capturing the vision of disintegration digitally on my computer. I managed to place some sequences of my most vivid memories around that central image but never got to draw others.

I'd hoped to draw the harrowing drive through a panicked city to retrieve our then-nine-year-old son, Dash, from the United Nations School that we thought a likely target that morning and, once we were all reunited, my breaking down in tears that shook my kids up far more than the events that precipitated my sobs.

I intended to do a sequence about my daughter, Nadja, being told to dress in red, white and blue on her first day at the Brooklyn high school she was transferred to while her school in Ground Zero was being used as a triage center. I forbade her to go, ranting that I hadn't raised my daughter to become a goddamn flag; she placated me by explaining she had the perfect jumper for the occasion.

I planned a "terror sex" sequence about the rumors of women patriotically rushing into the wreckage to give comfort to rescue workers at night and noted one Tribeca bachelor friend's wistful observation that those first days were "a really great time for picking up girls." (I responded that I couldn't imagine anything more detumescent than those two 110-story towers collapsing.)

I had anticipated that the shadows of the towers might fade while I was slowly sorting through my grief and putting it into boxes. I hadn't anticipated that the hijackings of September 11 would themselves be hijacked by the Bush cabal that reduced it all to a war recruitment poster. At first, Ground Zero had marked a Year Zero as well. Idealistic peace signs and flower shrines briefly flourished at Union Square, the checkpoint between lower Manhattan and the rest of the city. That was all washed away by the rains and the police as the world hustled forward into our "New Normal." When the government began to move into full dystopian Big Brother mode and hurtle America into a colonialist adventure in Iraq—while doing very little to make America genuinely safer beyond confiscating nail clippers at airports—all the rage I'd suppressed after the 2000 election, all the paranoia I'd barely managed to squelch immediately after 9/11, returned with a vengeance. New traumas began competing with still-fresh wounds and the nature of my project began to mutate.

respond to transient events while they're happening. (It took me 13 years to grapple with World War II in *Maus*!) Besides, nothing has a shorter shelf-life than angry caricatures of politicians, and I'd often harbored notions of working for posterity— notions that seemed absurd after being reminded how ephemeral even skyscrapers and democratic institutions are.

As the series got rolling I found my own "coalition of the willing" to publish it along with *Die Zeit*. Most of the distinguished newspapers and magazines that found a way to accommodate the large format, quirky content and erratic schedule were in the "old Europe"—France, Italy, the Netherlands, England—where my political views hardly seemed extreme. The concept of an overtly partisan press has a lot to recommend it. In America, my reception was decidedly less enthusiastic. Outside the left-leaning alternative press, mainstream publications that had actively solicited work from me (including the *New York Review of Books* and the *New York Times* as well as *The New Yorker*) fled when I offered these pages or excerpts from the series. Only the weekly *Forward*, a small-circulation English-language vestige of the once-proud daily Yiddish broadsheet, enlisted and ran them all prominently. I pointed out to the *Forward*'s editor that my pages, unlike the *Maus* pages that they'd once serialized, wouldn't have much specifically Jewish content. Offering me the Right of Return, he shrugged and said, "It's okay—you're Jewish."

The climate of discourse in America shifted dramatically just as I concluded the series. What was once unsayable now began to appear outside the marginalized alternative press and late-night cable comedy shows. A profile of me in the Arts section of the *New York Times* in the fall of 2003 even included the very panel of me feeling "equally terrorized" by al-Qaeda and by my own government that had made some editors visibly shudder two years earlier. *Sigh!* It's hard to be an artist who's consistently Seconds Ahead of His Time.

What changed? Basically, America entered its pre-election political season. Free debate is expected as proof of Democracy in action. And though it has been an enormous relief to hear urgent issues get an airing again, I was disappointed that vigorous criticism had been staved off until it could be contained as part of our business as usual. The feelings of dislocation reflected in these *No Towers* pages arose in part from the lack of outcry against the outrages while they were being committed.

Still, time keeps flying and even the New Normal gets old. My strips are now a slow-motion diary of what I experienced while seeking some provisional equanimity—though three years later I'm still ready to lose it all at the mere drop of a hat or a dirty bomb. I still believe the world is ending, but I concede that it seems to be ending more slowly than I once thought... so I figured I'd make a book.

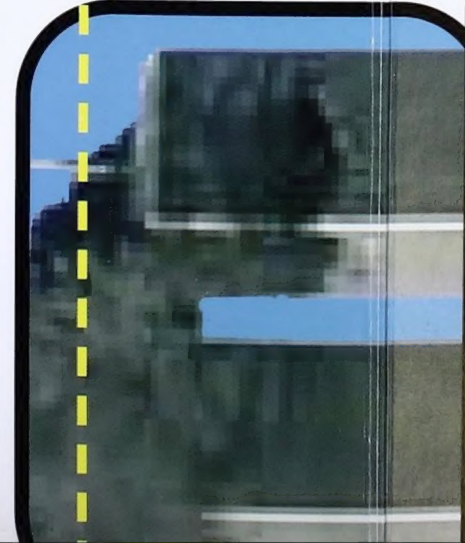
art spiegelman nyc, Feb 16, 2004



SYNOPSIS:
In our last episode, as you might remember, the world ended...

IN THE SHADOW OF NO TOWER

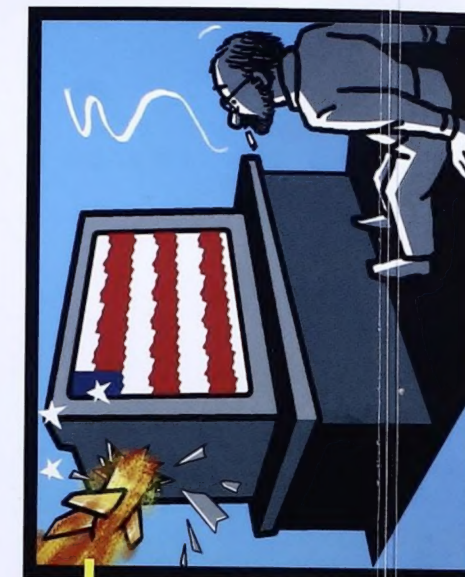
REVEALED: 19TH CENTURY SOURCE FOR 21ST CENTURY'S DOMINANT METAPHOR!



See crumbling towers burned their way into every brain, but I live in the outskirts of Ground Zero. I first saw it all live—unmediated.



Maybe it's just a question of scale. Even on a large TV, the towers aren't much bigger than, say, Dan Rather's head...



Logos, on the other hand, look enormous on television; it's a medium almost as well suited as comics for dealing in abstractions.



Still see the glowing tower, *Awesome* as it collapses—



was sure we were going to see it, I've always *sorta* suspected it, but that morning really convinced me."



NEW! IMPROVED!
JIHAD
BRAND FOOTWEAR®
All manmade materials.
(Extra-large sizes only.)
Available in finer shops near you!

My wife, my daughter, are rushing from the site. We hear a roar, a waterfall, and look back. The air smells of de

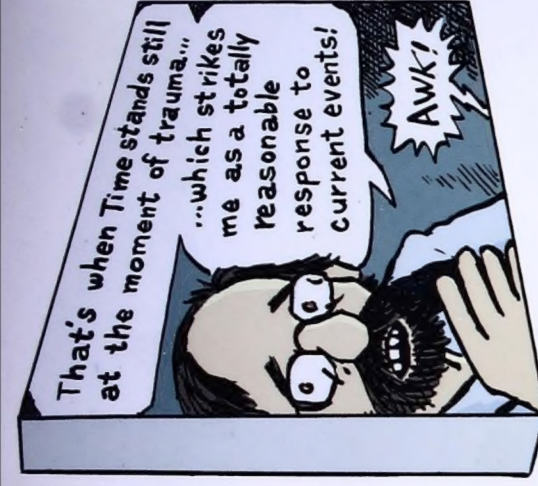
Many mont... passed. It's... move on... I'm finally up... September

Okay! Let's say it's September anymore...

I'm hunched over drawing tables in Lower Manhattan studio, with my tightly cross

...It's hard to hold a pen this way...

...but I'd feel like a jerk if a new disaster strikes while I'm sitting away at the



IN THE SHADOW OF NO TOWER



SYNOPSIS:
In our last episode, as you might remember, Time stood still. (And maybe it's just as well: last week the artist began describing his September morning with morning and only got up to about 9:15... Consider- ing that it takes him at least a month to complete each page, he should've started this "weekly" series in September 1999 to get it all told by Judgment Day...)

They raced to their daughter's school. His 2-pack-a-day habit wasn't great training for this sort of thing...

Towers in flames four blocks south.

NADJA!

NADJA! 23VY

SHE'S HYSTERICAL! LET HER IN TILL SHE QUIETS DOWN.

COFF

I remember my father trying to describe what the smoke in Auschwitz smelled like.

...The closest he got was telling me it was "indescribable."

After the attack, Nadja's school became a rescue center. The kids were sent to another school.

Some parents were upset that their kids would miss some college prep classes! ...We were thrilled our kid was away from Ground Zero.

Asbestos, PCBs, lead, dioxins, and body parts...

Lower Manhattan's air is a witch's brew that makes Love Canal seem like a health spa.

THERE ARE 3,000 KIDS IN HERE. WE'LL FIND YOUR DAUGHTER AND BRING HER DOWN!

NADJA?

They were the only parents allowed inside. Hysteria has its uses...

They couldn't see the maelstrom outside, but they could hear the guard's radio...

UN AEROPLANO ACABA DE ESTRELLARSE EN EL PENTAGONO!

HUH??
WH-WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?

THEY SAYING A PLANE JUST BOMB INTO THE PENTAGON.

NADJA?

WASHINGTON IN FLAMES
When I was Nadja's age, in 1962, I loved those Mars Attacks cards published by TOPPS GUM, INC. Funny how things turn out. I worked for Topps for 20 years, from the time I finished high school till Nadja was born.

He figured the Martians had invaded, that Paris was burning and Moscow was vaporized. His wife stayed more focused.

ATTENTION!...

WAIT! THE PRINCIPAL IS FINALLY MAKING AN ANNOUNCEMENT!

NAD-

**NYC TO KIDS:
DON'T BREATHE!**



I even designed a poster... But some parent's protested my poster for being too shrill.

Our government has been lying about the air quality, of course.

It's back to business as usual...but what can they do, evacuate the city for a generation?

They never even cleaned the air ducts at Nadja's school, so I helped set up a protest at City Hall...

I didn't want Nadja to go back to that school, but she loves it there and says I'm just paranoid!

I am of course...and all this has gotten me so anxious I smoke more than ever now.

...I'm not even sure I'll live long enough for Si Grotos to kill me. :cof:cof:cof:

It was hard for puny human brains to assimilate genuinely new information... and it remains just as hard now, these many months later...

Our hero is trapped reliving the traumas of Sept. 11, 2001... Unbeknownst to him, brigands suffering from war fever have since hijacked those tragic events...



WHY DO THEY HATE US? WHY? ??

He remembers that morning yet again: Before they decided to rush to their daughter's school below the burning tower...



WOW! I OUGHTA RUN HOME AND GET OUR CAMERA!

NAH! THERE'LL BE LOTS A PHOTOGRAPHERS!

In mere moments their quiet Soho street was FILLED with paparazzi. And camera crews remained on their corner, at the perimeter of Ground Zero, for days after...



WATCH HERE THE BIRDY!

He boos lat ac see

An aide finally pulls Nadja's schedule up on a computer but—just then the first tower goes out! The screen freezes!

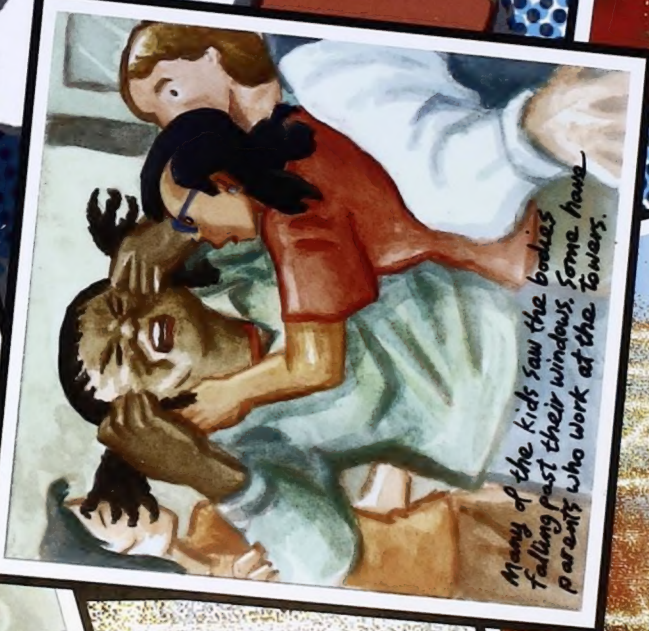


Power comes back, but the aide has run off screaming.



Many of the kids saw the bodies falling past their windows. Some have parents who work at the towers.

His memories swirl and events fade, but he still sees that glowing tower when he closes his eyes.



NADJA! I was scared the school would collapse before I found her. (Later she tells me she wasn't scared till she saw me there.)



We flew north on above the Hudson, passing who linger, calmly watching.

An elderly couple with suitcases run past, their backs from the front, their backs are white with ash. Then...

...a roar! We turn to see the bones of the tower glow and shimmy in the sky. Ever-so-slowly it cascades into itself, awesome... sublime.

Transfixed, Françoise shrieks "No! No! No!" over and over and over. Nadja holds up her school ID, telling everyone we'd left there as buried in the onrushing cloud. Parrying, I tell my wife and daughter to be quiet, or they'll start a panic.

They walked toward their loft...

Y'KNOW HOW I'VE CALLED MYSELF A "ROOTLESS COSMOPOLITAN," EQUALLY HOMELESS ANYWHERE ON THE PLANET? I WAS WRONG."



Meanwhile, an anniversary came and went... Many happy returns! (Amazing how time flies while it stands still.)

I FINALLY UNDERSTAND WHY SOME JEWS DIDN'T LEAVE BERLIN RIGHT AFTER KRISTALLNACHT!



Though he'd never own an "I ♥ NY" t-shirt, he had a pang of affection for his familiar, vulnerable streets.

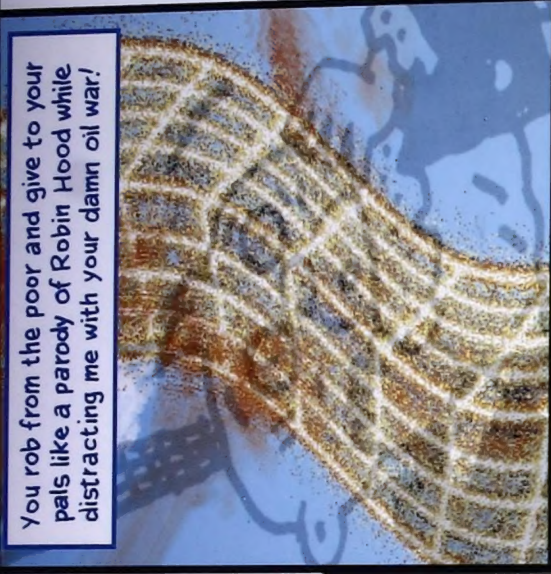


They passed some guy on painting the towers. Glaring they could only see the black smoke... the damned model.

Leave me alone, Damn it! I'm just trying to comfortably relive my September 11 trauma but you keep interrupting—



Like that mind-numbing 2002 "anniversary" event, when you tried to wrap a flag around my head and suffocate me!



You rob from the poor and give to your pals like a parody of Robin Hood while distracting me with your damn oil war!



Then the recent election — shut my eyes and *concentrate* — see the glowing bones of t

Trauma piles on trauma! Over half the country was already doubled over in pain after the *coup d'etat* in 2000...



Now everyone's too scared, stupefied or memorialized to stop you — but us basket cases are gonna form a *Third Party*...



Then, **WATCH OUT!**

RAMPAGING REPUBLICAN ELEPHANTS... DIMWITTED DEMOCRATIC DONKEYS... NO WONDER REAL AMERICANS DON'T BOTHER TO VOTE! THE TWO PARTY ANIMALS ARE BOTH 19TH-CENTURY DINOSAURS, INTERESTED ONLY IN THEIR OWN SURVIVAL, NOT OURS! WE NEED A THIRD PARTY THAT ACTUALLY REPRESENTS US... A NEW AND REVOLUTIONARY

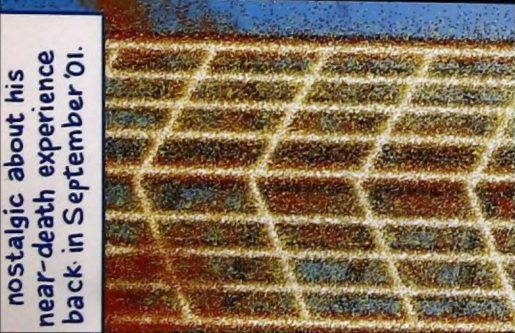
OSTRICH PARTY



JOIN YOUR FELLOW AMERICANS BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE...
RISE UP & STICK YOUR HEADS IN THE GROUND!



9



nostalgic about his near-death experience back in September 01.

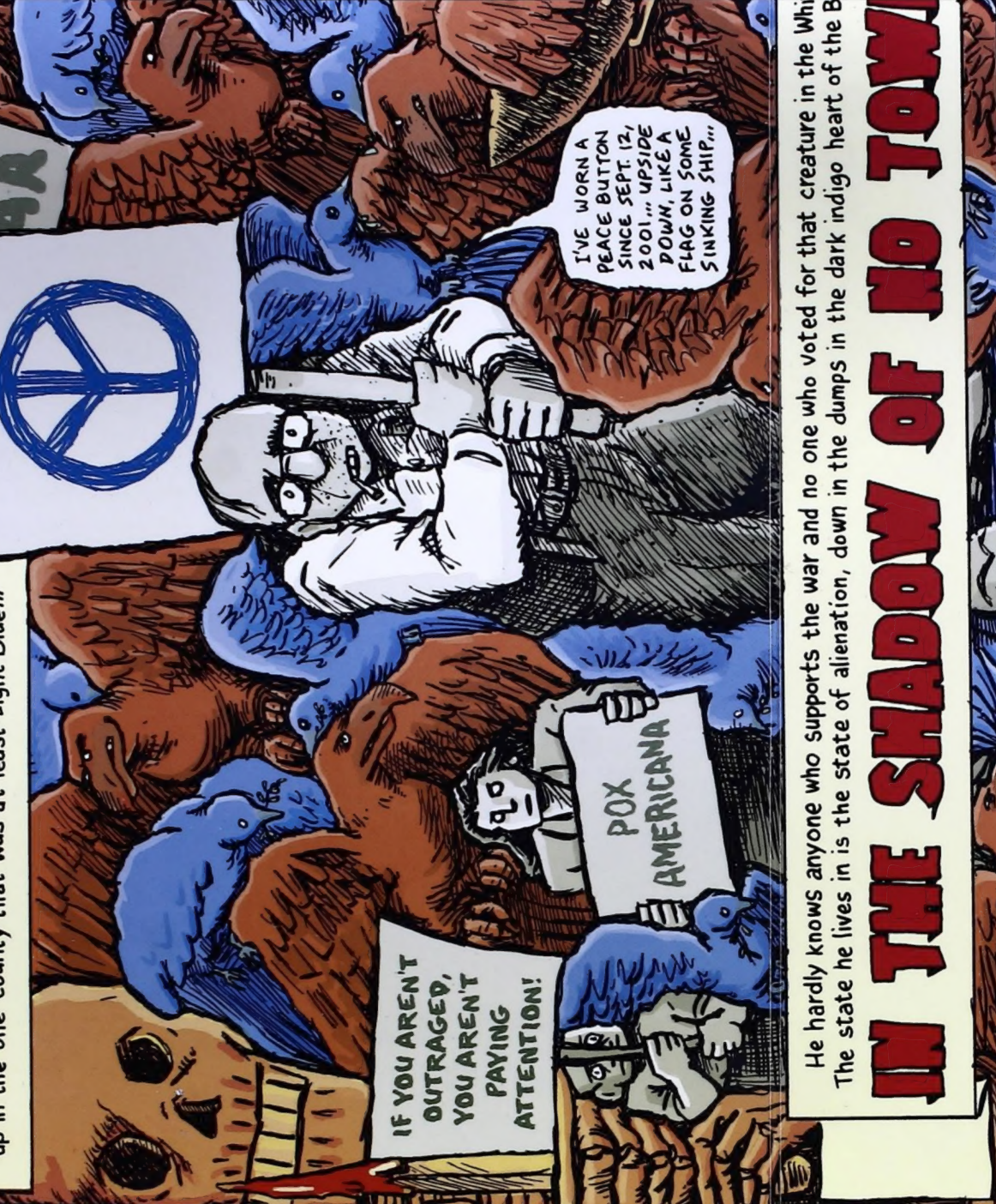
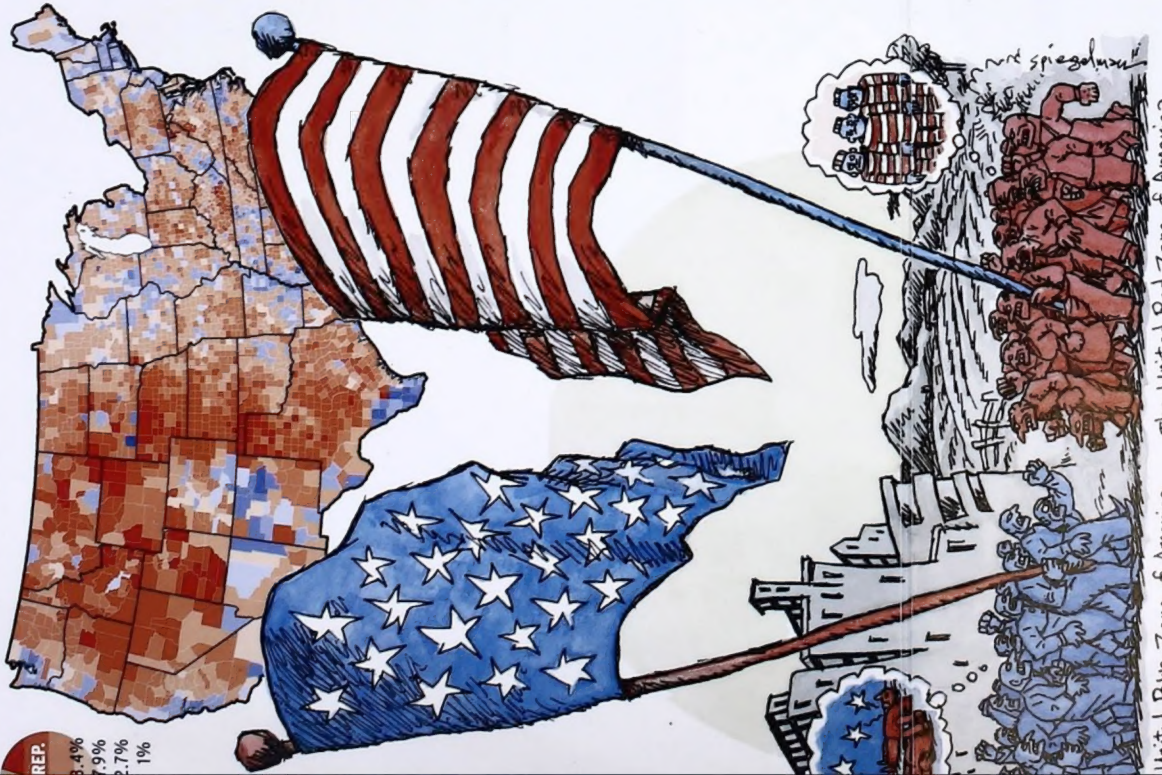
provincial American flags have to sprout out of the embers of Ground Zero?

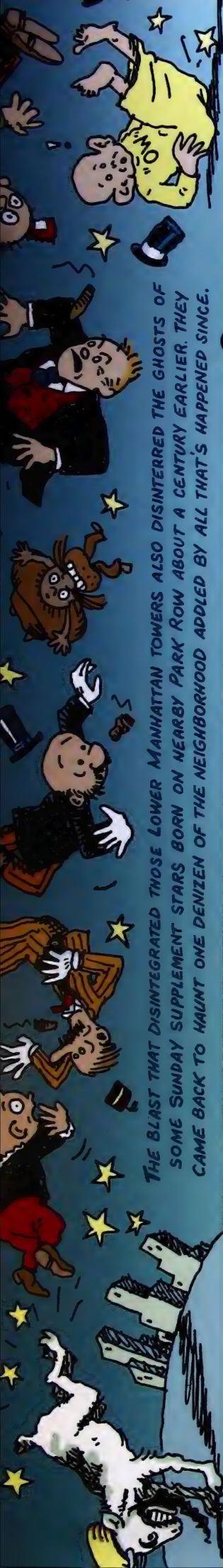
Notthin' like the end of the world to help bring folks together...

UNDER - DA - I CAN'T
HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORY:
RED ALERT!
SEVERE RISK OF TERRORIST ATTACK

HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORY:
ORANGE ALERT!
HIGH RISK OF TERRORIST ATTACK

HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORY:
RED ALERT!
SEVERE RISK OF TERRORIST ATTACK





THE BLAST THAT DISINTEGRATED THOSE LOWER MANHATTAN TOWERS ALSO DISINTERRED THE GHOSTS OF SOME SUNDAY SUPPLEMENT STARS BORN ON NEARBY PARK ROW ABOUT A CENTURY EARLIER. THEY CAME BACK TO HAUNT ONE DENIZEN OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ADDLED BY ALL THAT'S HAPPENED SINCE.



SO, HOW'D YOU LIKE THAT WAR? WELL, WE'RE NUMBER ONE! WE WON! WE WON! WE WON!



RAH! RAH! RAH! WHO'S THE BIGGEST?! WHOSE IS BIGGEST?!!



RAH! RAH!! BLAAH!



I CAN'T SEEM TO GET WITH THE PROGRAM... IF I WON ANYTHING, I SUPPOSE IT GOT LOST IN THE MAIL!



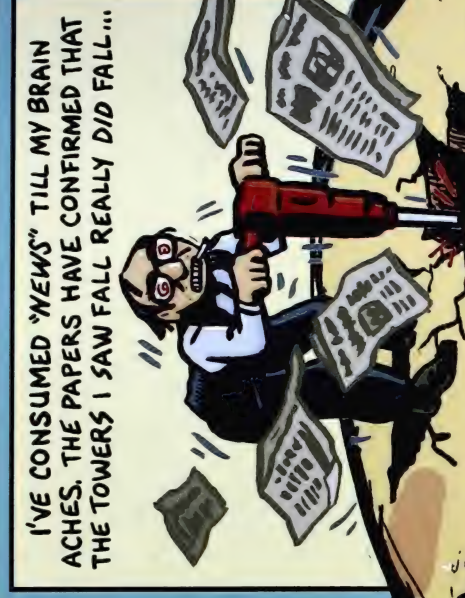
I KNOW I SEE GLASSES AS HALF EMPTY RATHER THAN HALF FULL, BUT I CAN NO LONGER DISTINGUISH MY OWN NEUROTIC DEPRESSION FROM WELL-FOUNDED DESPAIR!



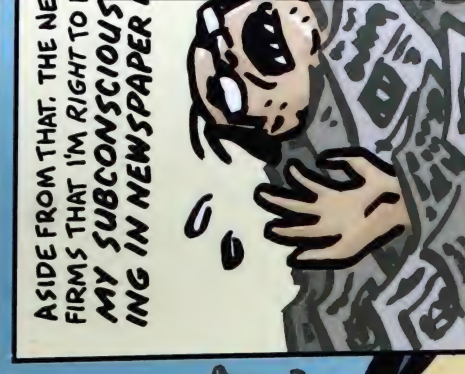
1/2 empty



1/4 full



I'VE CONSUMED "NEWS" TILL MY BRAIN ACHES. THE PAPERS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THE TOWERS I SAW FALL REALLY DID FALL...



ASIDE FROM THAT, THE NEW FIRMS THAT I'M RIGHT TO MY SUBCONSCIOUS MY SUBCONSCIOUS IN NEWSPAPER



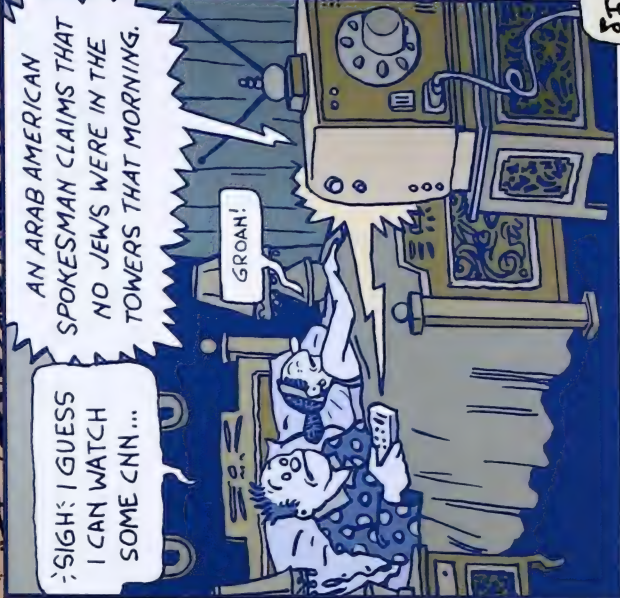
TIME PASSES. HE ABOUT HIMSELF IN PERSON AGAIN, INSIDE THE TOWERS THE KILLER APES NOTHING FROM TOWERS OF AUSC HIROSHIMA AND CHANGED ON 9/11. DENT" WAGES HIS WARS ON WAGES- DEADLY BUSINESS MEANWHILE, FEELING OVERWHELM ONE AND PARANOID



DK! SOME GUY COUNTED S MISSING INSIDE THE ENTAGON WAS ACTUALLY ON ONE OF THE PLANES THAT HIT THE TOWERS...

IT'S 2 A.M. ART: YOU'VE BEEN ON THE NET ALL DAY.

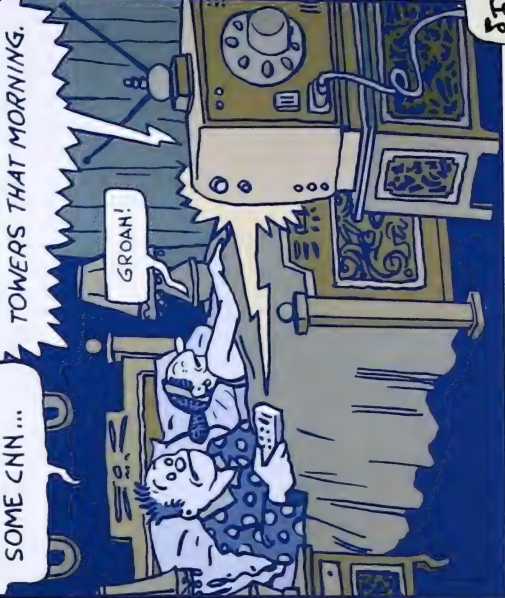
COME TO BED, YOU'RE GONNA GET NEWS! POISONING!



SIGH: I GUESS I CAN WATCH SOME CNN ... AN ARAB AMERICAN SPOKESMAN CLAIMS THAT NO JEWS WERE IN THE TOWERS THAT MORNING.



"CLEARLY NO KNOW-HOW



GROAN!

BAH! THE PARANOID PUTZ!



"CLEARLY NO KNOW-HOW



PRESIDENT BUSH WILL BE AT GROUND ZERO TODAY, WHERE HE-



TURN OFF THAT DAMN RADIO, YA TERRORIST!

HAVE YOU GONE NUTS?! I LISTEN TO THE RADIO EVERY MORNING!!



5 FREEDOMS JUST ANOTHER WORD FOR NOTHIN' LEFT TO LOSE...

I THOUGHT I'D LOSE I LOST MY MIND SO MY LAST SPECK OF WHEN THIS CABAL THIS REALLY IS THE



SO LOSE THAT CIGARETTE, MISCREANT!

NYC OUT OF NYC

In the Shadow of No Towers

I WAS WALKING BACK TO MY PLACE ON AVENUE C LAST NIGHT...

...THE SKY IS FALLING...

...MAYBE I REALLY WANT THE WORLD TO END, TO VINDICATE THE FEARS I FELT BACK ON 9/11! MAYBE IT'S JUST MY LITTLE WORLD THAT ENDED... BUT THEN I GLANCE AT THE NEWS AND THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO DOUBT...

ZAZOU, OUR 17 YEAR
OLD CAT, DIED RECENTLY."
WE ADOPTED THIS LITTLE GUY 'CUZ
HE LOOKS A BIT LIKE HIM!

SOLACE LEFT!... ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

Nothing like commemorating an event to help you forget it.

September 11, 2001, was a *memento mori*, an end to Civilization As We Knew It. By 2003, Gen-vine Awe has been reduced to the mere "Shock and Awe" of jingoistic strutting.

I CAN STILL VIVIDLY REMEMBER THE HORRORS OF GROUND ZERO ON SEPTEMBER 11... 2002!



I WAS AN EYEWITNESS TO THE BOMBARDMENT OF KITSCH ON SALE THAT DAY... AND I ALMOST BECAME A PARTICIPANT!



HAPLESS HOOLIGAN

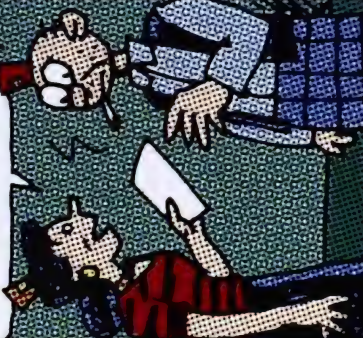
HEY, LOOKIT THIS FAX!



NBC IS BROADCASTING A 9/11 "CONCERT FOR AMERICA" FROM WASHINGTON, D.C....



BUSH AND LAURA WILL BE SPEAKING; PLACIDO DOMINGO IS GONNA PERFORM.



YEEH! TOSS IT OUT, IT OUT, QUICK QUICK QUICK! NEW YORKERS.



NO, YOU GOTTA DO IT! THIS SEZ THEY'LL ASK ME STUFF LIKE "WHO'S MY FAVORITE AMERICAN HERO!"



I DON'T EVEN BELIEVE IN HEROES! EXACTLY! ...YOUR POINT OF VIEW NEVER GETS ON NETWORK TV!



GROAN! IT'S HOPELESS!

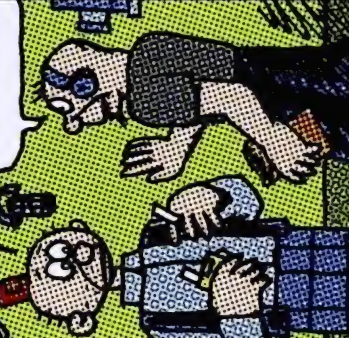


NOTE: THOUGH HAPPY HOOLIGAN IS A FICTIONAL CHARACTER BORROWED FROM THE FIRST SUNDAY COMICS, THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW IS 100% NONFICTION.

SO - UM- WHERE'S TOM BROKAW?



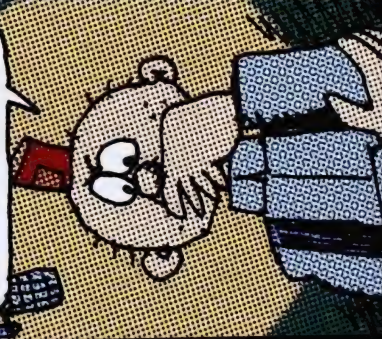
WAIT! IS IT ALRIGHT IF I SMOKE?



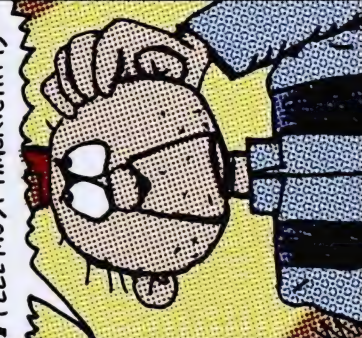
HERE WE GO: "MY FAVORITE AMERICAN FOOD IS..."



UMM... MY FAVORITE AMERICAN FOOD IS "... SHRIMP PAD THAI!



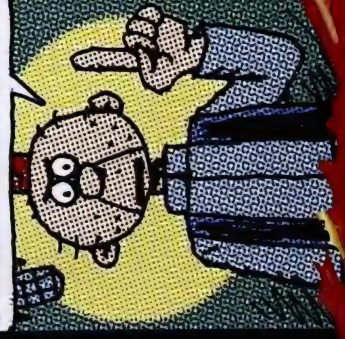
DON'T WORRY - WE CAN EDIT THAT OUT LATER... "THE PLACE IN AMERICA WHERE I FEEL MOST AMERICAN IS..."



PARIS, FRANCE!



...UH, THAT AS LONG AS YOU'RE NOT AN ARAB YOU'RE ALLOWED TO THINK AMERICA'S NOT ALWAYS SO GREAT!



RATS! I SHOULD'VE SAID "AMERICAN TOBACCO!"



"THE UNMENTIONABLE ODOUR OF DEATH OFFENDS THE SEPTEMBER NIGHT"
- W.H. AUDEN, "SEPTEMBER 1, 1939"

Right after 9/11/01, while waiting for some other terrorist shoe to drop, many found comfort in poetry. Others searched for solace in old newspaper comics. On 9/11/03 "the unmentionable odour of death" still offends as we commemorate two years of squandered chances to bring the community of nations together...



And September '04? Cowboy boots d Ground Zero as New York is transformed stage set for the Republican Presidential tion, and Tragedy is transformed into Tr

The Towers have come to loom far larger than life...

but they seem to get smaller every day...



—In the Shadow
of No Towers, #10

The Comic Supplement

POETRY readings seemed to be as frequent as the sound of police sirens in the wake of September 11. Workers needed poetry to soothe their pain, culture to help them in a wounded civilization. I have heard W. H. Auden's "Night Meeting" a dozen times in the last year, but my mind kept wandering to no solace in music of either—it seemed too exquisite. The only cult that could get past my flood of my eyes and brain thinking other than images of towers were old comic strips. Unpretentious ephemera, a nostalgic dawn of the 20th century, they were made with skill and verve but never in the last past the day they were in the newspaper gave a sense of history; they were just right for the world moment.



"The blast that disintegrated those Lower Manhattan towers also disinterred the ghosts of some Sunday supplement stars born on nearby Park Row. They came back to haunt one denizen of the neighborhood, addled by all that's happened since." —In the Shadow of No Towers, #8

hundred years and two blocks away from Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, twin titans of modern journalism, gave the newspaper comic strip as a by-product of the circulation war (a competition that led to the death of their papers inflamed public opinion, what may well have been the accident of an American ship in Cuba). Their distaste for the Spanish-American War—first colonialist adventure—would have been proud. Their sensationalism was the new Journalism and its emblem was the yellow kid. America's first newspaper cartoon star.

ded to edify the *New York World's* often immigrant readership with full-color illustrations of the great masterpieces of world literature. One of the first color newspaper strips was his purpose. The garish and off-register illustrations didn't up to the task, but the technology of outline drawings with flat colors. So, in the first Sunday color cartoon supplement, the world and elbowed out the High Art of the masses.

our jaded 21st century eyeballs to gauge the Pulitzer's exuberant splashes of color and gray type, but it was a Big Deal back then as well as figuratively—a 17"x23" (on the nickel paper). One recurring feature was Outcault's *HOGAN'S ALLEY* [PLATE II], a gang of street urchins in a Lower Manhattan ghetto. Like a cheerfully sociopathic Outcault drew scenes of political and

social commentary that teemed with brickbat violence, antic animal torture and the gleeful racism of the day. *Hogan's Alley* spotlighted one shanty-Irish gutter-snipe in a bright yellow nightshirt, a Yellow Kid, whose popularity made him not just the comics' first star but also America's first hot licensing property. The whole enterprise gave Hearst a bad case of supplement-envy and in 1896 he unveiled a rival cartoon section in his *New York Journal*, starring...



Outcault's Yellow Kid! The *Journal* touted its supplement as "Eight Pages of Polychromatic Effulgence That Makes the Rainbow Look Like a Lead Pipe!" Hearst's Kid appeared there as *McFadden's Row of Flats*, while the "original" Yellow Kid continued in Pulitzer's *Alley*, drawn by George Luks (later a noted painter of the Ash Can School), and twin Kids towered over the New York skyline.

When Dirks fled Hearst for Pulitzer in 1914, he continued his strip as *The Captain and the Kids*, while the original twins were masterfully cloned for Hearst by Harold Knerr, who drew the strip for decades under its original title. At the height of WWI's jingoistic fever, Knerr's characters were briefly rechristened *The Shenanigan Kids*, Mike and Alek, foreshadowing the recent American experiment in vindictive euphemism that brought us "Freedom Fries." (Dirks' kids lost their accents during the war and tried to pass for Dutch.) In any case, the little terrorists may well be immortal, still limping along at 107 in a few 21st century newspapers.

The Katzies inspired a gaggle of direct imitations and offshoots as well as spawning an entire medium. In one bland permutation, "Bunny" Schultze's *Foxy Grandpa* consistently foiled his two grandkids—marginally more socialized pranksters than Hans and Fritz—and made the comic supplement less anxiety-provoking for adults disturbed at seeing grown-ups regularly blown up. On one *GLORIOUS FOURTH OF JULY* in 1902 [PLATE IV] four cartoonists trapped in Hearst's bullpen collaborated to show Schultze's kids outdone by Dirks' Hans and Fritz: they dynamite Grandpa's patriotic reading of the Declaration of Independence. Injured in the explosion, Alphonse, one of the two pathologically polite Frenchmen created by Frederick Opper, explains to Gaston: "I detest the Fourth of July!" I tell you, some of those century-old crumbling newspaper pages seem like they were

emerging language of comics and served up a memorable cast of slapstick characters. The most unforgettable of his now almost forgotten strips was *HAPPY HOOLIGAN* [PLATE V], a Chaplinesque victim *avant le lettre*, whose tin-can hat was once as iconic as Chaplin's Derby. On August 27, 1911, the hapless hobo, described by Opper as "Misfortune's favorite son," trades his tin can in for a turban to become Abdullah Hooligan, a dark-skinned circus clown who provokes his camel and gets tossed into... a tower of acrobats!

Hiring the highly respected Opper was a preemptive act on Hearst's part, designed to stave off the charges of vulgarity, violence and illiteracy that began to be leveled at the new comic supplements a second or two after they were born. Their cardinal sin was that they were *Sunday* supplements—the day kids ought to be in Sunday school studying the Bible, not yukking it up with semiliterate full-color lessons in mayhem. Still, the perpetual tug of war between vulgar and genteel culture in America has often been a fruitful one—generating New Orleans whorehouse jazz on the one hand and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* on the other.

The *Chicago Tribune*, for example, launched Lyonel Feininger's *KINDER KIDS* in 1906 [PLATE I] to appeal to its upscale German immigrant readers as a sophisticated antidote to the coarse Katzenjammers. Feininger's visually poetic formal concerns collided comically with the fishwrap disposability of newsprint, but his unamused editors pulled the plug on the project a few months later. The cartoonist, a New Yorker who had emigrated to Germany at sixteen and returned to safe harbor in America in 1937, became a celebrated second-generation cubist, one of the Bauhaus boys, but his handful of Sunday pages—testing the uncharted waters between the high and low arts, between European and American graphic traditions—remains his greatest aesthetic triumph.

The first decade of comics was the medium's Year Zero, that moment of open-ended possibility and giddy disorientation that inevitably gave way to the constraints that came as the form defined itself. One of the most exhilarating anomalies of that topsyturvy moment was Gustave Verbeck's short-lived *UPSIDE DOWNS OF LITTLE LADY LOVEKINS AND OLD MAN MUFFAROO* [PLATE III]. A frighteningly ingenious experiment in compression, the first half of these strips magically becomes the second half when the reader turns the page 180 degrees. Twin

and while an eccentric artist like Verbeck could turn that structure on its head, Winsor McCay, the towering genius of the first decade of comics, drew monumental structures designed to last. A signifi-



cant early innovator of the animated cartoon form as well as comics, McCay excelled in giving shape to our dream lives, as concrete in his renderings as Feininger was abstract. In his instantly popular *LITTLE NEMO IN SLUMBERLAND* [PLATE VI], which began in the *New York Herald* at the end of 1905, we've traveled a long way from Hogan's Alley. Nemo, a young boy from a well-heeled family, journeyed nightly to a dreamland of baroque architecture and circus pageantry to hang out with King Morpheus' daughter before waking up, usually distressed, in the last small panel. Changes in scale (of panels as well as everything else), figures flying and falling and the real-world fantasy architecture of McCay's beloved New York City dominated the stunning weekly pages.

In our September 29, 1907, example an outsized Nemo and his companion, a Jungle Imp, are lost in the canyons of Lower Manhattan, and make their way to the South Street piers along the East River. A

Nemo and the funnies' move to the bourgeois suburbs in an early strip of his own, *Nibsy the Newsboy*, about a streetwise slum kid who gets dragged off to "Funny Fairyland." McManus then

resumed his own long-term project: bringing sitcom domestic comedy to the comics, an undertaking that culminated in his classic *BRINGING UP FATHER* [PLATE VII]. Usually focused on marital and class strife—Maggie, a *nouveau riche* shrew, tries to drag her lottery-winning prole of a husband, Jiggs, up the social ladder—this episode takes place in a dreamland where cartoon characters can keep towers from tumbling.

But it was *KRAZY KAT* that hit me hardest. George Herriman's *Kat-Pupp-Mouse* love triangle has been universally celebrated as the jewel in the dunce cap of my art form; and for once, I'm comfortable going with the crowd, one that has included cultural arbiters like e. e. cummings and Umberto Eco. There have been many "one-note" strips in the history of comics—Winsor McCay's short-lived *Little Sammy Sneeze*, about a tyke whose powerful sneezes knock over everything from a pushcart to, eventually, a whole city, comes to mind—but never anything like *Krazy Kat*: the lyrical and idiosyncratic Deco-doodle-style strip featured a Kat who loves getting "beamed by a brick" tossed almost daily by a malevolent mouse, Ignatz, who is then chased by one Offissa Pupp (a bulldog quietly in love with the Kat) who tosses the miscreant into a jail made of... bricks!

The strip's admirers could and did read Herriman's daily variations as anything from political allegory (Mouse as Anarchist, Kop as Fascist, Kat as the elusive spirit of Democracy) to psychosexual drama (Mouse as Ego, Kop as Superego and Kat as untrammelled Id). But the ineffable beauty of *Krazy Kat* was that it was simply about a Kat getting konked with a brick. It presented an open-ended metaphor that could contain *all* stories simultaneously; and after September 11, Ignatz started looking a lot like Osama Bin Laden to me!

One silent page from 1936 shows Krazy caterwauling in the ever-shifting desert-scape of Coconino County. Kat is joined by Kop for a duet, then by Mrs. Kwak Wak for a trio. A forlorn note tumbles into the panel and, after conferring, they all realize that they have no choice but to join Ignatz in his cell for a quartet. This is deep stuff, and after the attack it hit me like a ton of bricks: it proposed that since every Eden has its snake, one must somehow learn to live in harmony with that snake! I'm still working on it.

triumphant departure of the kids, in the family devoted...



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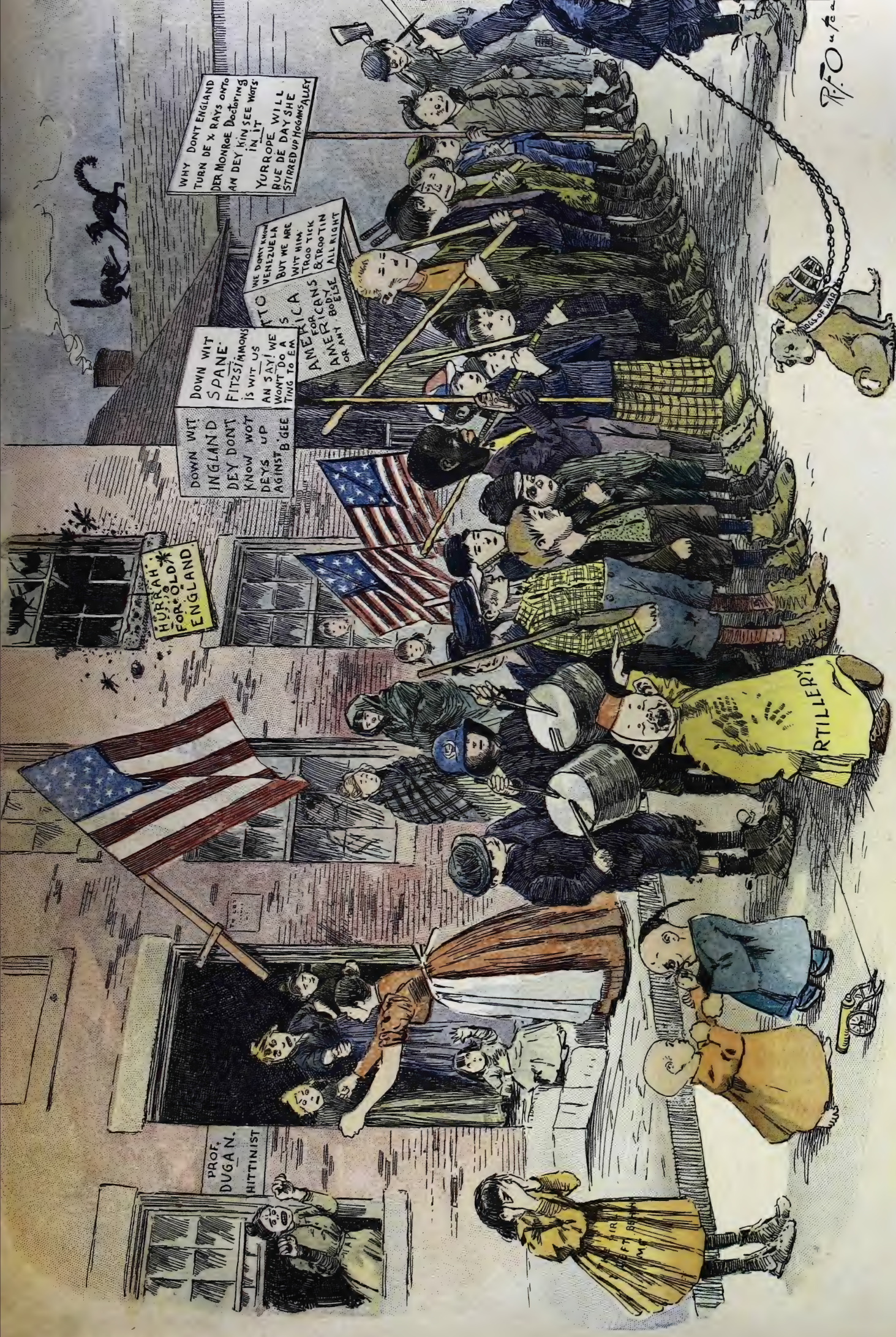
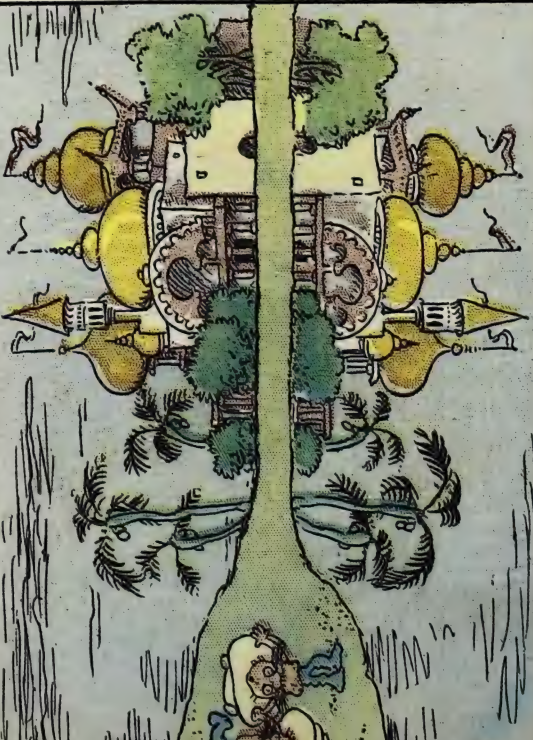


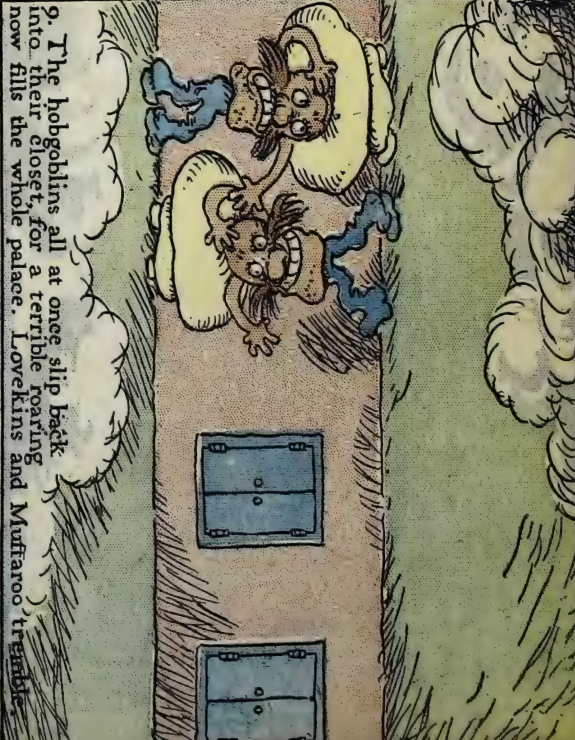
PLATE II

THE UPSIDE-DOWNS OF LITTLE LADY LOVEKINS AND OLD MAN MUTTFA • THE FAIRY PALACE.

11. They climb down, more frightened than hurt, and run away. Lovekins resolving never to give way to idle curiosity again.

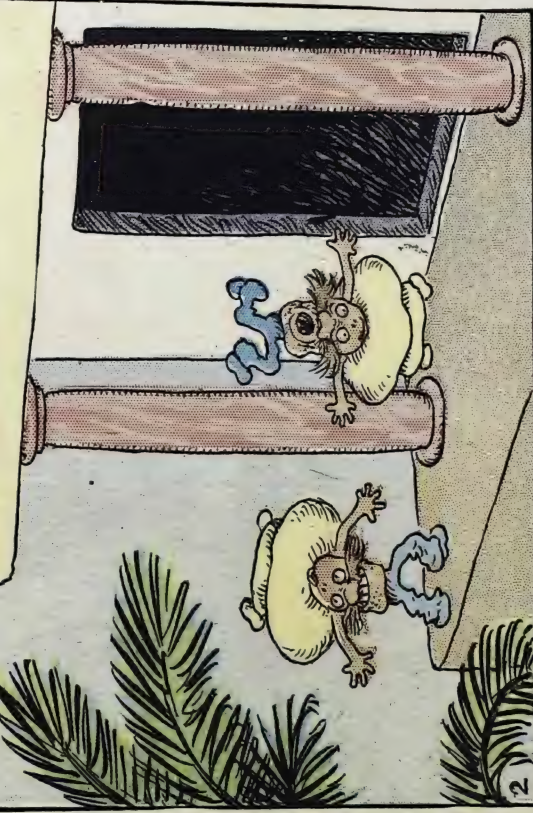


12. The hobgoblins all at once slip back into their closet for a terrible roaring and Muffaroo trembles now fills the whole palace. Lovekins and Muffaroo tremble.



13. Then he vanishes, and pretty soon they find the two mysterious closets. Muffaroo remembers the Genie's words.

14. And tosses them right through the door, into the branches of a palm-tree outside.



15. "Let us go in!" cries little Lady Lovekins, and as the big door stands wide open, in they go!

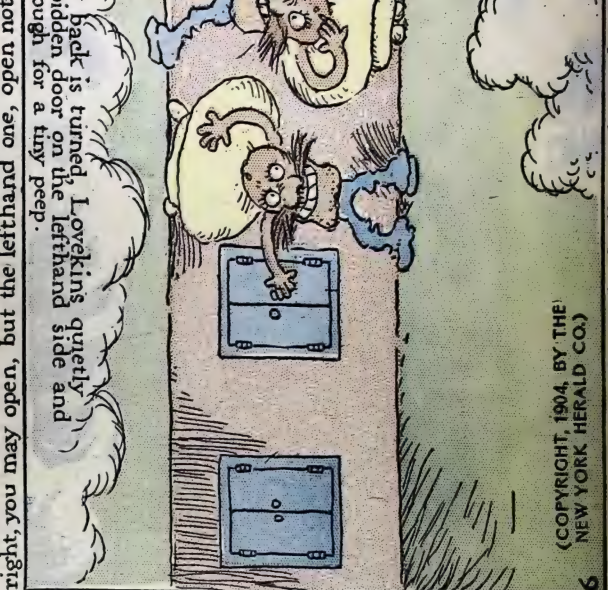


16. So he opens only the righthand door, and behold! out come a lot of funny little fairies, singing sweet songs to them. "How do you do, fairies!" Muffaroo calls out

PLATE III



17. Inside, a great Genie floats up to them in a cloud of smoke. "You will find two mysterious closets," says he. "You may open, but the lefthand one, open not, for a terrible roaring and Muffaroo trembles now fills the whole palace. Lovekins and Muffaroo tremble."



18. The fairies go back, and Muffaroo closes the door. "I wonder what is in the other closet," says Lovekins. "Ah, that we shall never know!" replies Old Man Muffaroo.

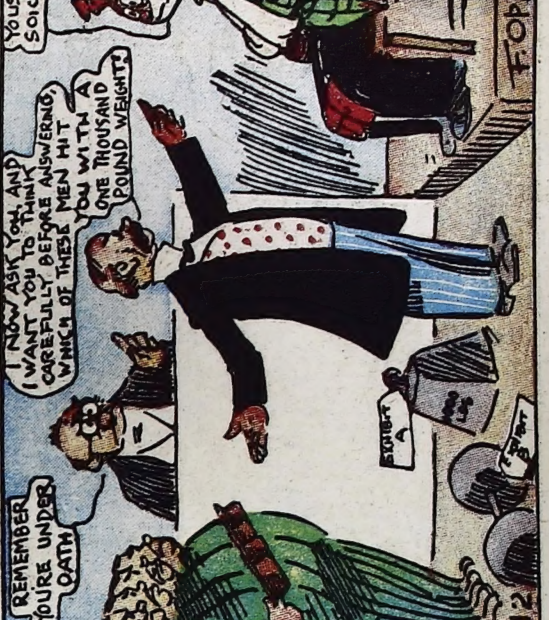
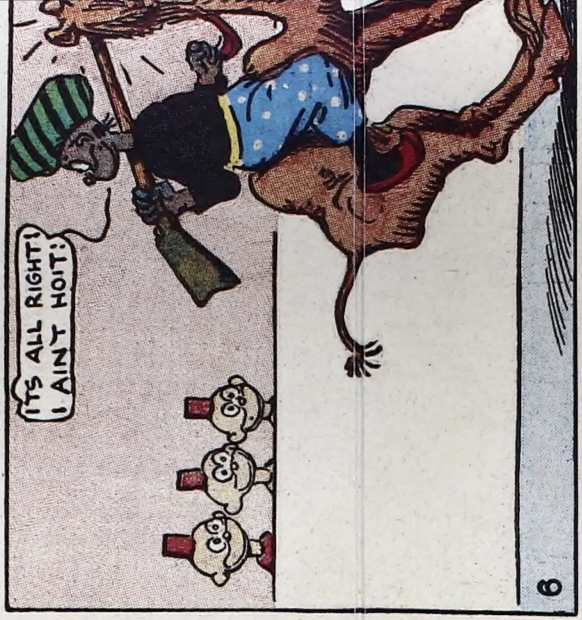
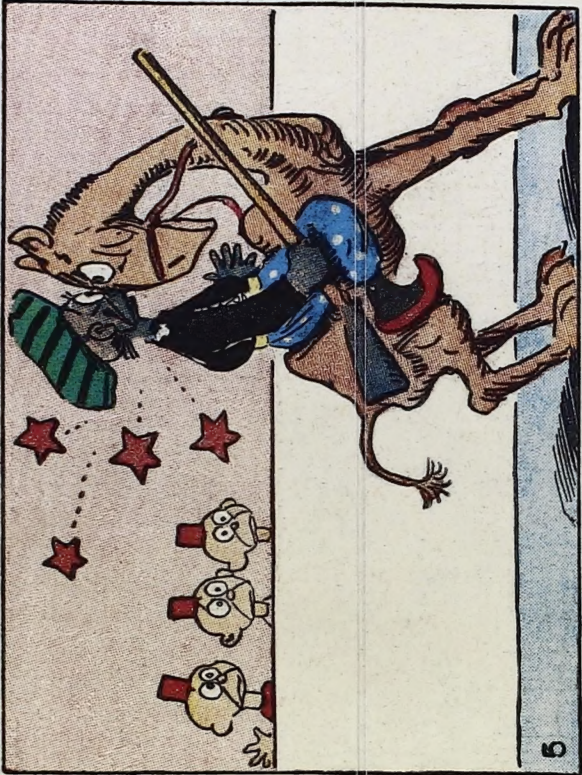
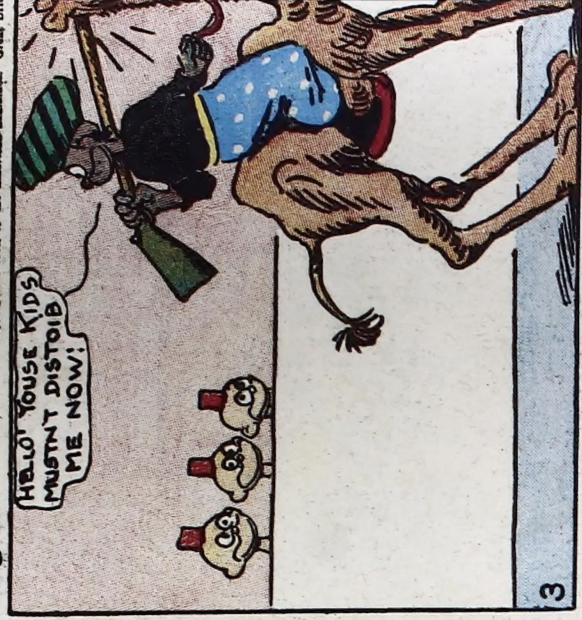
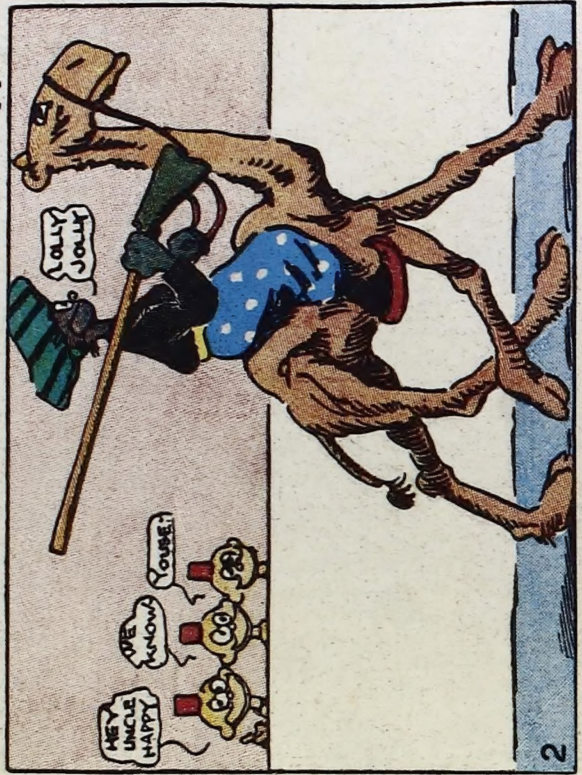
Copyright 1962.

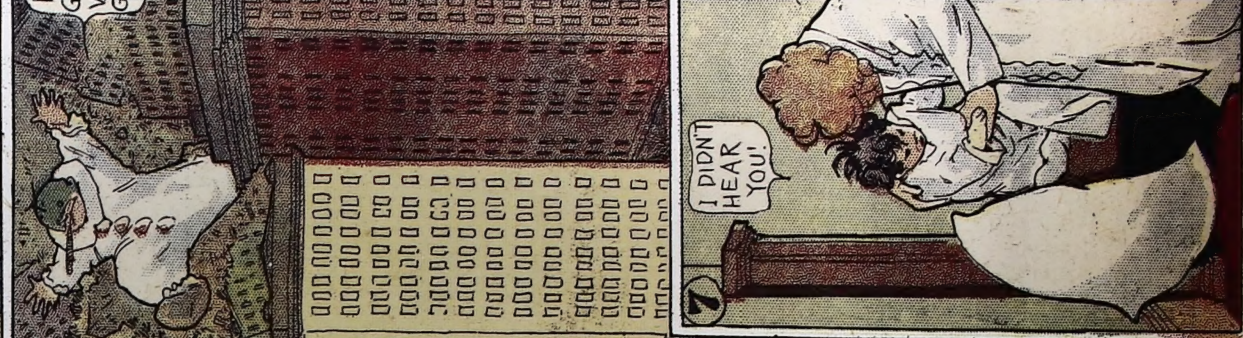
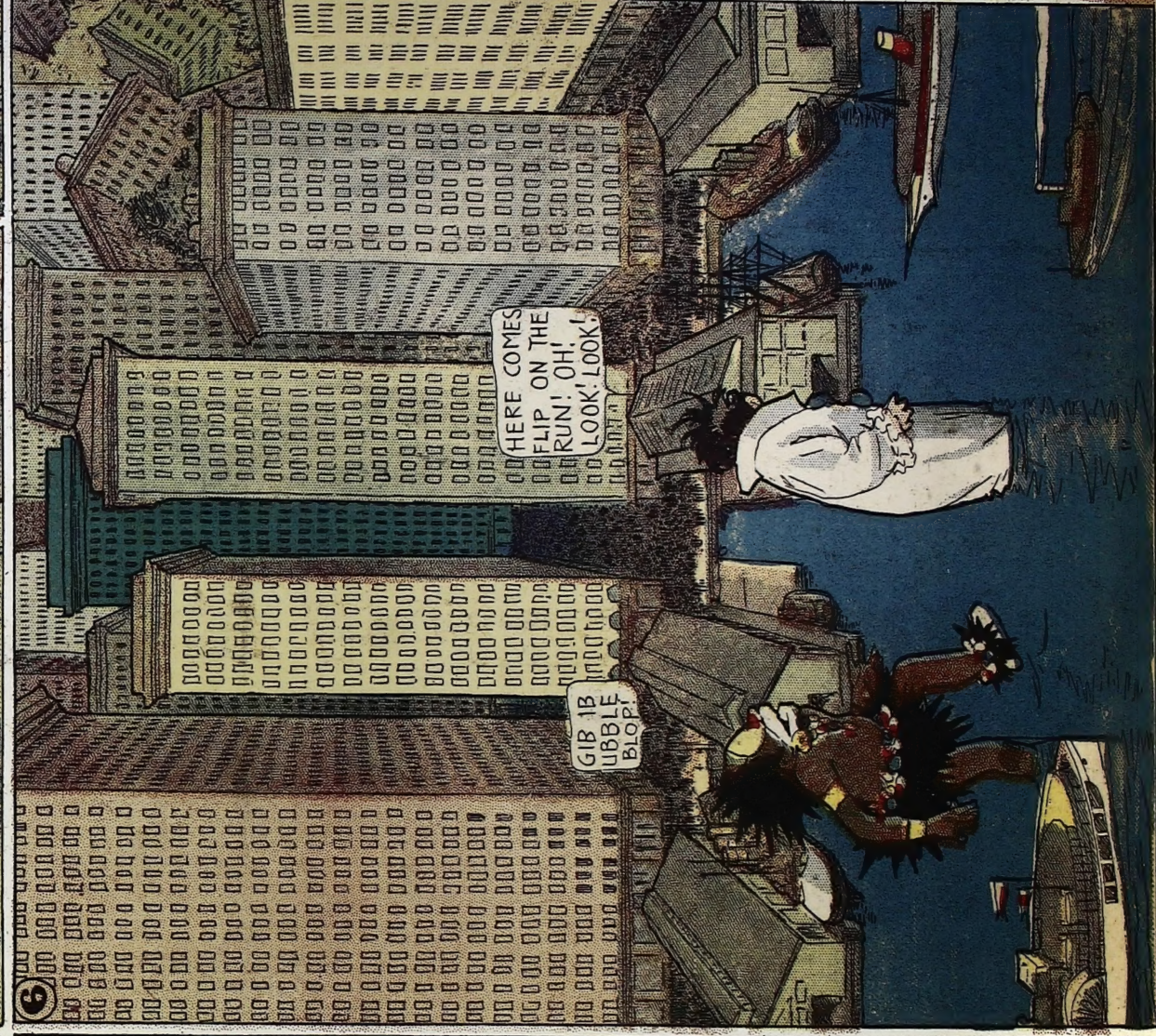
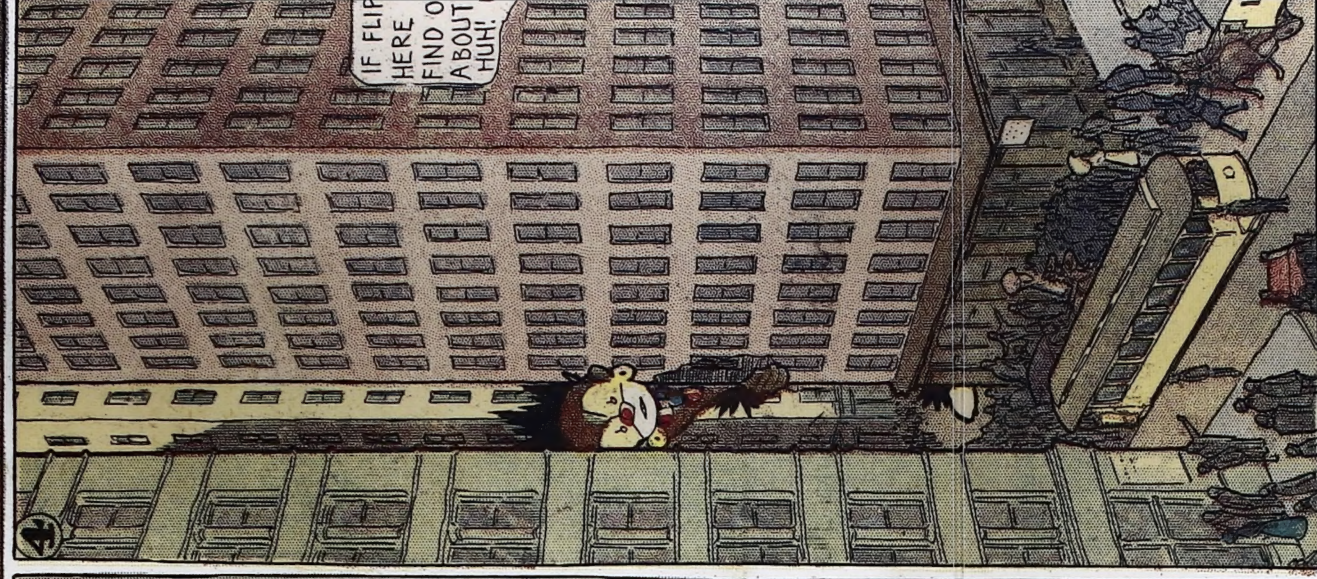




Is This Abdullah, the Arab Chief?

No, Gwendolln, It's Our Old Friend Happy Hooligan!





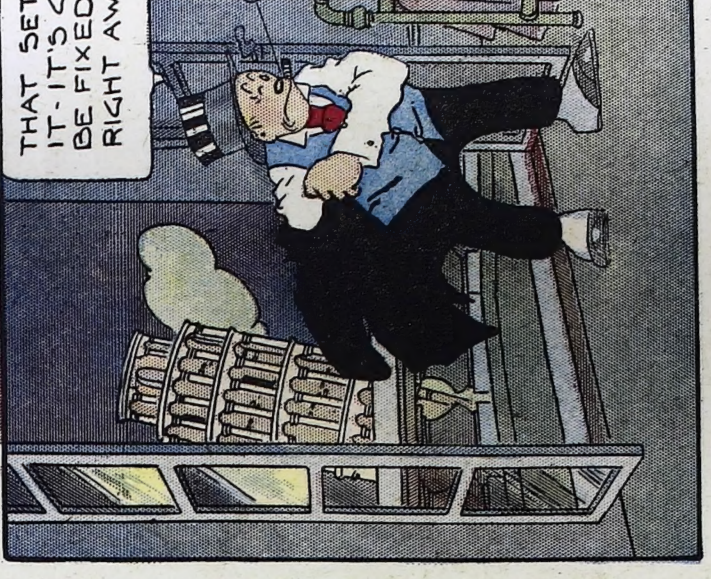
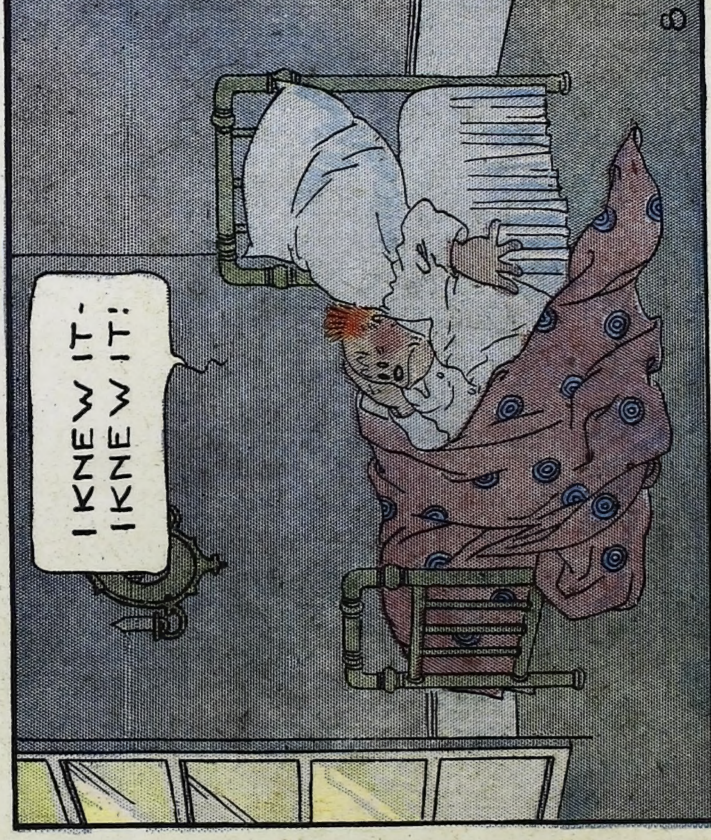
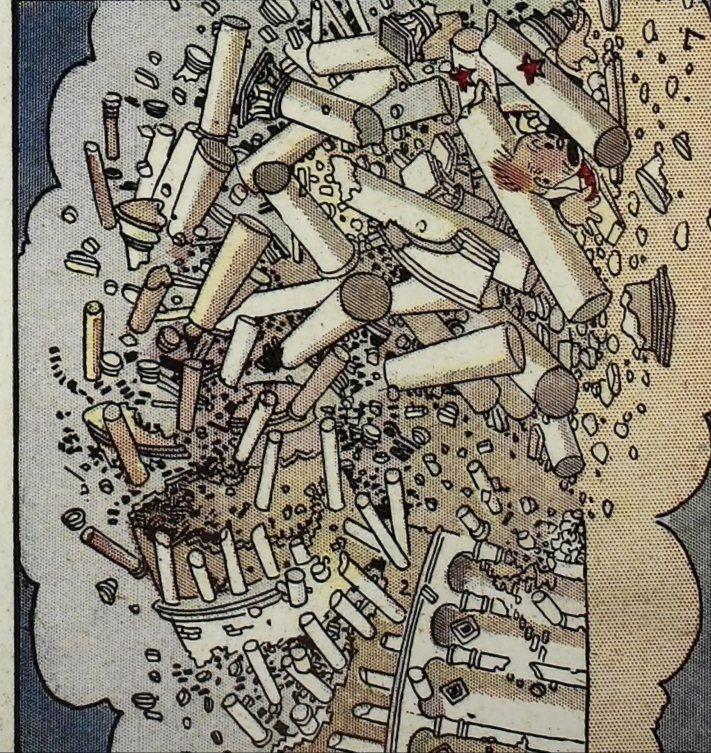
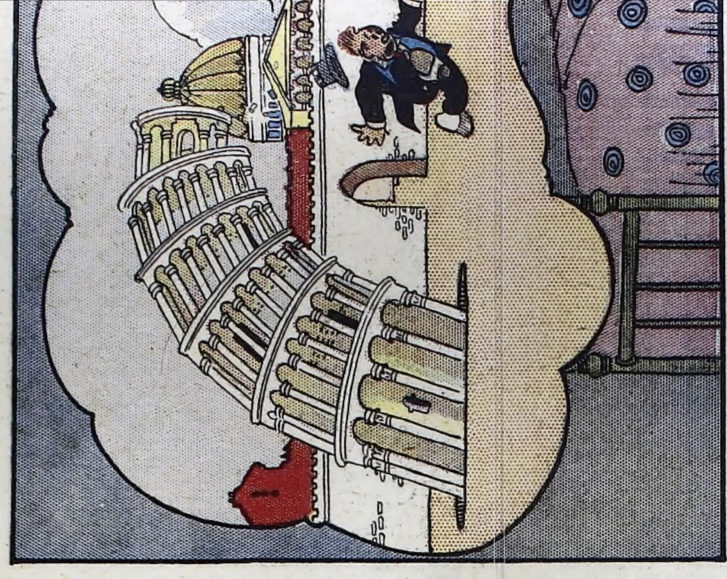
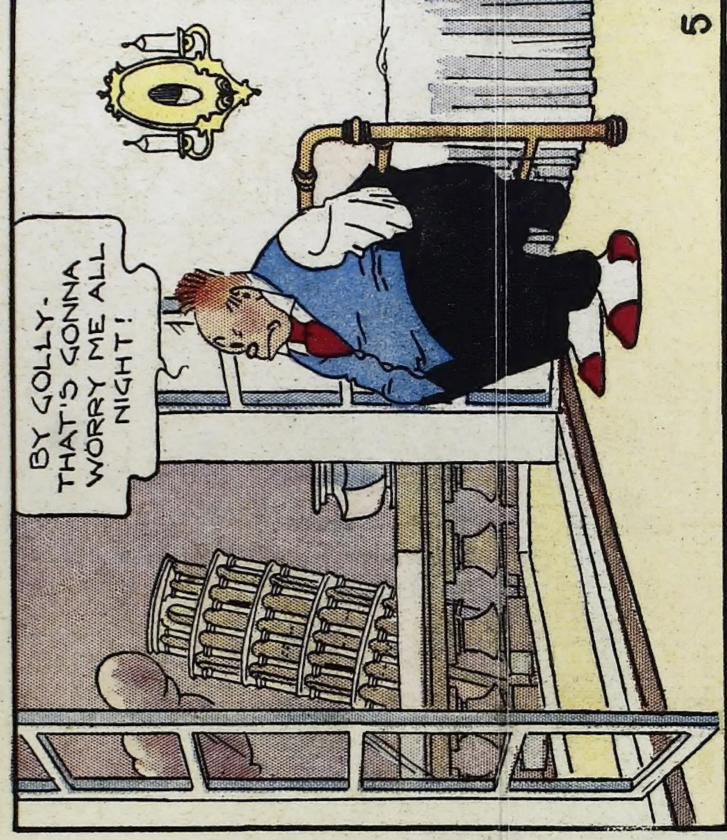
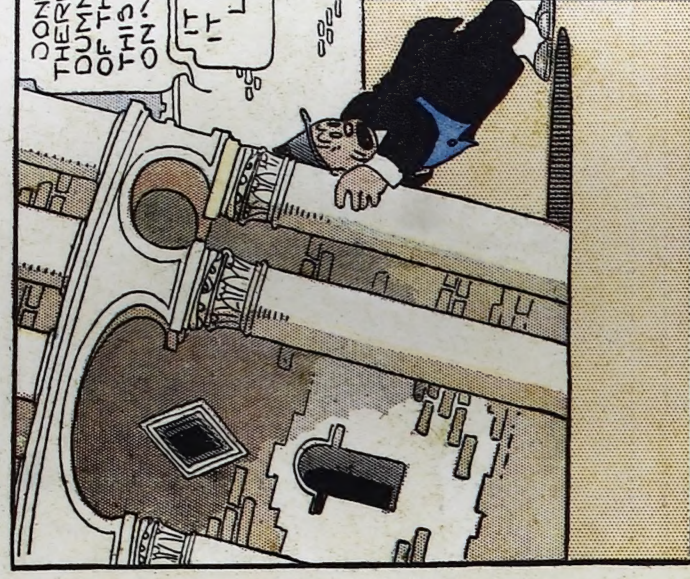
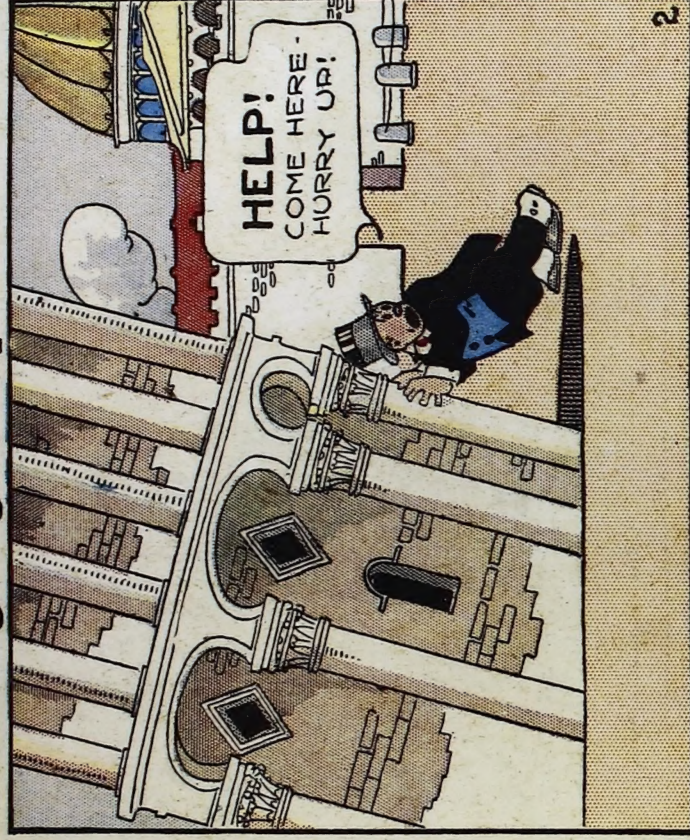
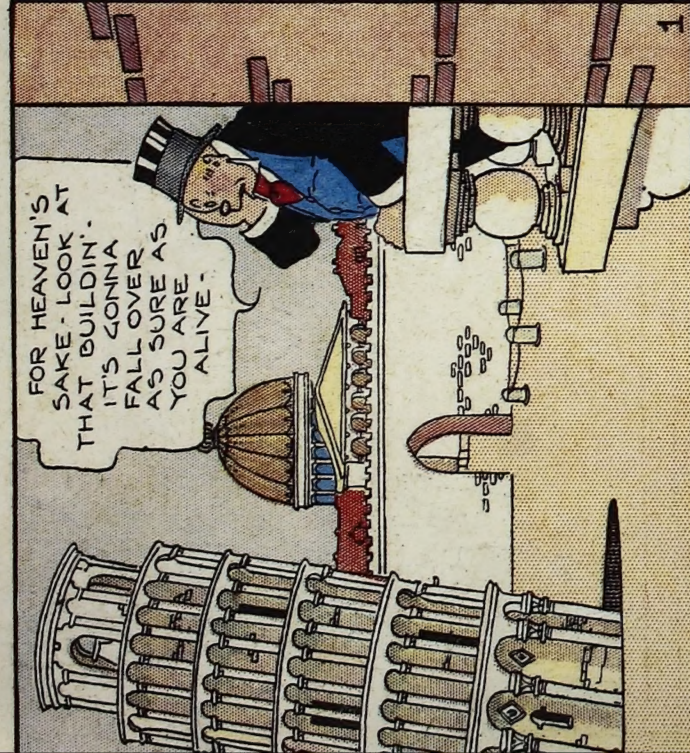
MOST VISIT
GENOVA WHILE
WE ARE IN
ITALY.

TELEPHONE AN'
SEE IF HE'S IN!

BEGIN EACH DAY WITH
"BRINGING UP FATHER"
APPEARS EVERY
IN THE NEW YORK AME

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Bringing Up Father



PRESIDENT'S WOUND WORSE

"FIRE! THE WORLD TRADE CENTER IS ON FIRE!"

EMMA GOLDMAN IN JAIL
CHARGED WITH CONSPIRACY
Time 9/11/01
Hijacked jets hit twin towers and hit Pentagon in day of terror
Caught Hiding in a Chicago Flat and Taken to Police Headquarters—A Warrant Is Formally Accusing Her of Being a Murderer
dent McKinley.
LIVE IMAGES MAKE VIEWERS WITNESSES TO HORROR
NY Times 9/11/01
VEHEMENTLY DENIES THAT SHE INSPIRED CZOLGOSZ.

TALIBAN IN TEXAS FOR TALKS ON GAS PIPELINE
The 1,300km pipeline will carry gas across Afghanistan's harsh terrain
BBC 12/4/97

WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE—BUSH CALLS FOR BIN LADEN'S HEAD
NY Post 9/18/01

THE AGE OF IRONY COMES TO AN END
Time 9/24/01

RADIO WARNS AFGHANS OVER FOOD PARCELS
DO NOT CONFUSE THE CYLINDER-SHAPED BOMB WITH THE RECTANGULAR FOOD BAG
BBC 10/28/01

BIN LADEN USES 10 LOOKALIKES TO FOIL HUNT
Reuters 11/17/01

BIN LADEN'S VEGAS VIDEO!
HIGH STAKES, HOOKERS AND HUMMUS
Weekly World News 12/31/01

FORGET OSAMA, SAYS BUSH BUT LOOK OUT, SADDAM
AP 3/14/02

ANTI ARAB ASSAULTS SURGE HERE
NY Post 9/21/01

WAR IS HELL
(ON YOUR CIVIL LIBERTIES)
Time 11/15/01
IN NY, TAKING A BREATH OF FEAR
ILLNESSES BRING NEW DOUBTS ABOUT TOXIC EXPOSURE NEAR GROUND ZERO
Wash. Post 1/8/02

NEW YORK CITY SMOKING BAN SMELLS SWEET TO NEW JERSEY BAR OWNERS
Knight-Ridder/Tribune 2/2/03

TRAUMATIC MOMENTS END, BUT REMINDERS STILL LINGER
NY Times 11/6/01

THREE-QUARTERS OF AMERICANS SURVEYED SAID THEY FLEW FLAG AFTER SEPT. 11
AP 7/3/02

MUSLIMS SAY THEY'RE AVOIDING JULY FOURTH EVENTS OUT OF FEAR OF BEING MISTAKEN FOR TERRORISTS
AP 7/4/02

PROHIBITED WEAPONS; ILICIT ARMS KEPT TILL EVE OF WAR, AN IRAQI SCIENTIST IS SAID TO ASSERT
NY Times 4/21/03

BUSH, BLAIR AND THE "EUROWIMPS"
Time 4/8/02

PROTESTS; 1.5 MILLION DEMONSTRATORS IN CITIES ACROSS EUROPE OPPOSE A WAR AGAINST IRAQ
NY Times 2/16/03

BUSH SWOOPS IN, LANDS ON CARRIER
CALLS LIBERATION OF IRAQ BLOW AGAINST TERRORISM
NY Daily News 5/2/03

BEWARE THE BRIEFCASE BOMB
NY Post 2/12/03

PENTAGON OPENS CRIMINAL INQUIRY OF HALLIBURTON PRICING
NY Times 12/24/04

NEW YORK TIMES IN SHOCK AS REPORTER'S LIES ARE UNCOVERED
The Guardian 5/12/03

THE TRUTH WILL BE AS ELUSIVE AS SADDAM
The Guardian 7/6/03

MILLER TIME (AGAIN)
THE NEW YORK TIMES OWES READERS AN EXPLANATION FOR JUDITH MILLER'S FAULTY WMD REPORTING.
Slate 2/12/04

WEAPONS OF MASS DISAPPEARANCE
Time 6/09/03

EDGY CITY MOVES TO ORANGE
NY Post 12/23/03

SODA SPILL ON LOBBY FLOOR OF FBI CAUSES COMMOTION
The Oklahoman 2/12/03

A TERROR WARNING FOR N.Y. AND D.C.
TERROR KINGPIN OSAMA BIN LADEN MAY BE PREPARING TO BOMB NEW YORK OR WASHINGTON
NY Daily News 12/14/98

BRITNEY VIDEO

FOR WORSE

Remove Several Stitches Because of Slight Irritation Due to Presence of a Fragment of Mr. McKinley's Coat, Carried Into the Wound by the Bullet, but They De-
PATIENT TAKES FOOD FOR THE FIRST TIME.

Dr. McBurney Had Planned to Leave for New York Last Night, but He Postpones His Departure and Takes Part in a Consultation of Surgeons that Lasts for Two Hours—Latest Operation Will Delay Healing of Wound.

LATEST OFFICIAL BULLETIN.
MILBURN HOUSE, BUFFALO, Sept. 10.—10.30 P. M.—The condition of the President is unchanged in all IMPORTANT particulars. His temperature is 100.6; pulse, 114; respiration, 28.

When the operation was done on Friday last it noted that the bullet had carried with it a short distance beneath the skin a fragment of the President's coat. This foreign material was, of course removed, BUT A SLIGHT IRRITATION OF THE TISSUES WAS PRODUCED, THE EVIDENCE OF WHICH HAS APPEARED ONLY TO-NIGHT. It has been necessary on account of this slight disturbance to remove a few stitches and partially open the skin wound.

This incident cannot give rise to other complications, but it is communicated to the public, as the surgeons in attendance wish to make their bulletins entirely frank. In consequence of this separation of the edges of the surface wound the healing of the same will be somewhat delayed. The President is now well enough to begin to nourishment by the mouth in the form of pure beef juice.

(Signed)
P. H. RIXEY,
M. D. MANN,
ROSWELL PARK,
HERMAN MYNTER,
CHARLES MCBURNEY.
GEORGE B. CORTELYOU,
Secretary to the President.
(Special to The World.)

BUFFALO, Sept. 10.—Midnight.—The bulletin issued at 10.30 P. M. printed above marks a most important development. It was known that something unusual had occurred when the customary 9 o'clock bulletin did not make its appearance and the consultation of physicians continued. They remained at the Milburn house for an hour and a half. The President was there, having decided to postpone his departure. It was announced that he may not leave Buffalo before Wednesday or Thursday. The physicians left the house they declared that no uneasiness was felt.

STITCHES TAKEN OUT.
Several of the stitches were simply taken out, they said, and after a thorough antiseptic washing of the inflamed tissues the wound was again sewn up. No anesthetic was used. Considerable delay was caused by the fact that a dressing desired by the surgeons was not in the house, and it was necessary to send for it. The first time the messenger returned he did not bring what was needed and was sent back. "NO OTHER COMPLICATIONS." The surgeons seek to allay all apprehension by the positive statement that this incident cannot give rise to OTHER complications. They say the only effect will be to slightly delay the healing of the wound. The bulletin added, reassuringly, that Mr. McKinley had been able to allow a little beef tea—the first time he has taken food in the normal way since he was shot.

The President's brother, Abner McKinley, was in the house while the surgeons were at work. With him were Secretary of War Root, Secretary Cortelyou, John G. Milburn and Harry Hamlin, who has been entertaining Senator Hanna. In connection with to-night's developments it is explained that the reopening of the outer wound did not affect the two interior wounds, one in front and one in back, from which the President is suffering. Both of these wounds it was added, are healing nicely. At 1 A. M. Secretary Cortelyou hurried over to the press tent with Mr. McKinley.

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ART SPIEGELMAN IS THE CREATOR OF THE PULITZER PRIZ
A SURVIVOR'S TALE. THE TWO-VOLUME WORK HAS BEEN
EIGHTEEN LANGUAGES. IN 1980 HE AND HIS WIFE, FRANCOISE M
RAW, THE ACCLAIMED AND INFLUENTIAL MAGAZINE OF AVA
AND GRAPHICS, WHICH THEY CO-EDITED UNTIL 1991. FROM I
WAS A STAFF ARTIST AND WRITER FOR THE NEW YORKER,
HIS POWERFUL BLACK-ON-BLACK 9/11 COVER A FEW DAYS AFT
DRAWINGS AND PRINTS HAVE BEEN EXHIBITED IN MUSEUM
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. SPIEGELMAN LIVES, AGAINST ALL TH
MANHATTAN WITH HIS WIFE AND THEIR TWO CHILDREN, NADJA